

Past President's Message



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By the time you read this message, Council will have met in Rio de Janeiro to decide on the location of the 2010 IPS conference. We were indeed fortunate in having three strong bids—Beijing, China; Alexandria, Egypt; and St. Etienne, France—as I am sure you will agree, especially after reading the articles about each bid in the March 2007 issue of the *Planetarian*.

Congratulations to the winner, and—as the bid process for 2010 began during my own term as president—a special thanks from me to all of the bidders for their presentations, both in the *Planetarian* and to Council. Putting together a conference bid, let alone running the conference itself, is no easy task. There are many, many things to consider, such as advance hotel room rates, considering the travel and accommodation requirements for guest speakers, and so on.

Speaking of the Council meeting, many thanks to the staff of the Rio de Janeiro Planetarium for all of the help that they gave us in preparation for the 2007 Council Meeting. Although I am putting together this message before the meeting, I have no doubt that it will have been a great success. Big thanks also to our president, Susan Button, for her wonder-

ful work in making it all happen! As you may know, South America—and, in particular, Brazil—is a part of the world in which I have been hopeful that we shall see growth in IPS membership and a possible affiliate. I hope shortly to be able to report that the idea of a new affiliate has come to fruition! While on the subject of affiliates, China is still well on track for holding its first official meeting of the new Chinese Planetarium Society which, at the time of writing, is expected to be held this September.

As chair of the International Relations Committee, I am pleased to report that I have added two new members: Dale Smith and David Weinrich. Both are keen to reach out to new parts of the world and have extensive travel experience. David also serves on Council and Dale brings a wealth of experience to the committee as a former IPS president and chair of the Publications Committee.

I was very pleased to make a contribution to Steve Tidey's Forum Column in this issue (see page 34) on the subject of the expertise required by planetarium presenters. I have plenty to say about this subject in the column, and it is certainly a subject that I think about often. In my opinion, a planetarium needs to be set aside from movie theatres or other related experiences, and the key factor is the presence of a knowledgeable operator who can inspire everyone to take a look at the night sky!

Susan Button, in her president's message (see page 28), will no doubt be mentioning the progress made by the officers on several topics of importance to the IPS. It's possible that not all IPS members realise the enormous amount of communication that takes place between the officers, who also meet together at times quite apart from the Council meetings and biennial conferences. The officers were delighted, at the end of June, to be able to meet in Hilo, Hawaii, at the Imiloa Astronomy Centre. We were hosted by IPS Treasurer and Membership Chair

Shawn Laatsch, who is planetarium manager there. We had a very productive time and were very pleased to attend a meeting of the Mauna Kea Observatories Outreach Group, made up of outreach staff from several different organisations.

IYA 2009 Coming Up

One of the very important upcoming events of which we should all be mindful is IYA2009, the International Year of Astronomy. The year 2009 was chosen, of course, because it is the 400th anniversary of the first use of the telescope for astronomical purposes. It's important to have IPS involvement in this special year and we certainly intend to promote it as much as possible. Each country is planning its own special events, and I am very pleased to be representing the planetarium community here in Australia, where the Astronomical Society of Australia (the ASA) is coordinating activities. In addition, IPS Outreach Chair and former IPS President Jon Elvert is on the American Astronomical Society (AAS) planning committee, representing the IPS for the IYA. In September, at the upcoming conference of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific in Chicago, Jon will be participating on an AAS panel session to discuss IYA initiatives. ☆



Officers (from left) Martin George, Lee Ann Hennig, Shawn Laatsch and Susan Button at the officers' meeting at the Imiloa Astronomy Centre in Hawaii. President-elect Tom Mason joined us via computer conferencing. Photos by Martin George.



The meeting of the Mauna Kea Observatories Outreach Group, held at the Caltech Submillimetre Observatory Headquarters in Hilo.